

Your Council in YOUR hands:

Island Labour's Plans from 2013

When elected, Labour councillors always act in the interests of the many, not the few. Labour councillors do not sit silently by, doing as they are told, but always seek to ensure the Isle of Wight Council speaks for YOU.

From May 2013 Labour Councillors at County Hall will seek to achieve or exert influence upon the following-

COUNCIL TAX & BUDGET

- We believe in local government funded by local taxation and we know that Council Tax freezes are eventually paid for by taxation through another route
- However, we will always limit Council Tax increases to the rate of inflation
- We will conduct an urgent review of the position of Council reserves and unspent 'earmarked budgets'
- We will use already healthy Council reserves to prevent cuts to front-line services when necessary and as far as is financially secure for the Council

EMPLOYMENT & JOBS

- We will introduce a Living Wage for all Council employees and build this in as a contractual requirement for all of the Council's direct suppliers.
- We will promote the use of local workers on the Highways PFI, buy locally wherever possible, and support apprenticeships in local firms.
- We will work with the Isle of Wight College to deliver training courses to match new jobs in a sustainable economy.

QUALITY OF LIFE, HEALTH & CARE

- We will seek to protect Council-provided care services for the elderly and vulnerable in full consultation with their user groups.
- We will prioritise closer working with mainland hospitals and health centres to ensure appointments are scheduled at a realistic and convenient time for Island patients.
- We will seek support for patients and carers travel to the mainland (in view of increasing fares) and the fact that only the passenger ferry fare is currently covered i.e. not cars, taxis or buses.
- We will restore positive working relations with the Riverside Centre as a key social hub and will ensure increased support for the wide range of disability groups on the Island.

SCHOOLS & CHILDREN

- Sure Start Children's Centre's funding needs to be restored to give children the best possible start in life through improvement of childcare, early education, health and family support.
- We oppose the relentless drive towards forcing schools to become academies and the move towards 'selection' in schools. We believe that ALL children should be able to achieve their full potential in education.
- We will ensure that the safeguarding of vulnerable children is a real priority of the Council.

HOUSING & DEBT

- We will work for more affordable and social housing for Island residents
- We will ensure that all new housing developments include at least 33% affordable homes, and at least 50% when built on Council owned land.
- We will support the ongoing campaign of Labour MP Stella Creasy against the Tory linked 'Wonga' and other payday loan companies, whom she describes as effectively "legal loan sharks". We call on the government to impose a legal cap on lending rates, as happens in most other European countries.
- We will instead support the local Credit Union and their benefit for Island residents in managing money, bills and budgets including those unable to access High Street Banks.

- We will support green energy schemes that reduce carbon footprint and resident bills.

OUR ENVIRONMENT

- We will work positively to encourage sustainable energy production and development through onshore and offshore wind, the development of tidal power and actively explore how these energies can be used by the Council itself in its offices and estates.
- We will pledge to protect the environment by promoting recycling and tackling enviro-crime with a zero tolerance approach, targeting resources in our towns and villages.
- We will steward our green spaces, parks and trees responsibly. We also have a duty to make sure the Island plays its part in becoming a *sustainable, low carbon Island* that can be enjoyed by present and future generations.
- We will help set up Energy Co-operatives, which will make it cheap and easy for Island households, streets and neighbourhoods to come together to purchase their energy needs at lower prices, and to purchase more energy from affordable sources.

TRANSPORT

- Seek to establish a transport passenger group, with representatives from transport operators (SVOC, Island Line, Wightlink and Red Funnel), Island residents and councillors with a view to make public transport connect and work better for local residents.
- Create a discounted-ticket park and ride operation for Island towns, reducing the number of cars in town centres.
- Work closely with town and parish councils to identify areas where speeding frequently occurs and look at potential solutions.
- Increase the cost of parking for over 4 hours in town centre locations, freeing up more space and allowing shoppers into town.
- Allow those on low incomes (minimum wage) to benefit from half-price bus travel, paid for by scrapping half-price bus travel for high earners at the Isle of Wight Council.

CRIME AND JUSTICE

- Using existing resources and working with partner agencies, we will establish an effective “Community Response Team”. Their role will be to tackle and prevent anti-social behaviour which includes dealing with environmental crime, such as dog-fouling, littering and fly-tipping, as part of a Cleaner, Greener Wight campaign. The team will also help residents suffering from anti-social behaviour and nuisance, offering a visible presence as well as practical support and assistance. The Community Response Team will patrol the Island on a daily basis but will also have regular drop in sessions so that residents can call in to see them, raise any concerns they have about their neighbourhood and get advice from professionals.
- Ensure that the Isle of Wight gets its fair share of policing and other resources from the newly elected Police Commissioner. We opposed the introduction of Police Commissioners but now that we have one in place we will work with the Commissioner constructively for the good of the Island and make sure that his work is properly scrutinised and the Island does not get further isolated and neglected.
- We will continue to support neighbourhood policing from both Police Officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). We know from talking to people that they want to see a swift and strong response to the things that matter to them such as anti-social behaviour and violent crime, including domestic violence. We will always promote collaboration with other public sector organisations and believe strongly that the results are gained this way rather than bringing in private companies (such as G4S to act as poor substitutes).

TOURISM

- We recognise the importance of the tourist industry to the economy of the Island. We would therefore aim to help achieve growth in tourism by providing guidance and expertise ‘in house’ to support Island activities such as the Walking Festivals and ‘Randonnee’.
- We will seek a review of the Island facilities such as environmentally friendly sports and leisure pursuits would be undertaken, so that meaningful involvement and support can be provided by the ‘in house’ team.

Deborah Gardiner & Katie Curtis

Chair & Secretary of the Isle of Wight Labour Party

on behalf of all Labour candidates for the IW Council

28 March 2013